

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JERUSA 00912 300654Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSM-03 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08
FRB-03 INR-10 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02
OPIC-03 SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 DOE-15 SOE-02
DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 SS-15 /106 W
-----035696 301515Z /46

R 291607Z MAR 78
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 638
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TUNIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 912

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PDEV, EAID, XF, IS, JO
SUBJECT: NABLUS MAYOR BRINGS HOME THE BACON

SUMMARY: NABLUS MAYOR BASSAM SHAKA' RETURNED HOME MARCH 28
CLAIMING TO HAVE COLLECTED \$11 MILLION IN AID FROM
EXPATRIATE NABLUSIS AND ARAB GOVERNMENTS IN EIGHT
STATES HE HAS VISITED DURING THE LAST FOUR MONTHS. BY
HIS ACCOUNT, CONSERVATIVE ARAB REGIMES HAVE BEEN SLIGHTLY
MORE GENEROUS THAN RADICAL ONES. APPARENTLY, THE PLO
HAS BLESSED HIS EFFORTS AND HAS, PERHAPS, CONTRIBUTED
FUNDS AS WELL. NEVERTHELESS, SHAKA' HAS CAREFULLY
TOUCHED BASES WITH THE JORDANIANS. NOW, THE BIG
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PAGE 02 JERUSA 00912 300654Z

QUESTION IS THE ISRAELI REACTION. WHATEVER THAT IS,
SHAKA'S PERSONAL PRESTIGE AND EXPERIENCE HAVE BEEN
ENHANCED.
END SUMMARY

1. BASSAM SHAKA, MAYOR OF THE WEST BANK'S LARGEST CITY,
RETURNED TO NABLUS MARCH 28 AFTER A FOUR-MONTH FUND-

RAISING TRIP WHICH TOOK HIM TO EIGHT ARAB STATES. (N.B. HE HAS BEEN AWAY SINCE SOON AFTER SADAT VISIT TO JERUSALEM.) BEFORE LEAVING, SHAKA' TOLD CONGEN OFFICER HE HOPED TO COLLECT \$11 MILLION FOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS INCLUDING SEWERS, HOUSING AND ELECTRICITY. NABLUS' ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET, NOT INCLUDING DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS, NOW EQUALS ABOUT \$4.5 MILLION. RECENTLY, MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS IN NABLUS ESTIMATED SHAKA' HAD OBTAINED ONLY ABOUT HALF THAT AMOUNT, BUT UPON HIS RETURN SHAKA' CLAIMED NEAR TOTAL SUCCESS.

2. DESPITE A LARGE LIBYAN COMMITMENT, CONSERVATIVE ARAB GOVERNMENTS HAVE BEEN MORE GENEROUS THAN RADICAL ONES. CONTRIBUTIONS, AS REPORTED IN "AL QUDS," AS FOLLOWS:

- SAUDI ARABIA, \$4 MILLION, FROM KING KHALED TO BE TRANSFERRED THROUGH THE SAUDI EMBASSY IN AMMAN;
- LIBYA, \$3.6 MILLION COMMITTED NOW AND \$2 MILLION TO BE COMMITTED OVER NEXT TWO YEARS;
- ABU DHABI, \$1 MILLION;
- QATAR, \$300,000;
- NABLUSI EXPATRIATES, \$2 MILLION.

3. IN ADDITION, KUWAIT HAS PLEDGED AN UNDETERMINED AMOUNT AND UNIS REPORTEDLY WILL STUDY PARTICIPATION IN MUNICIPAL PROJECTS.
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PAGE 03 JERUSA 00912 300654Z

4. AS REPOTED REFTEL, SHAKA'S FUNDRAISING HAS HAD THE BLESSING OF AND SOME ASSISTANCE FROM THE PLO. BETHLEHEM'S MAYOR FREIJ, NO FRIEND OF HIS NABLUS COUNTERPART, GOES FURTHER AND INSISTED, IN RECENT CONVERSATION WITH POLOFF, THAT PLO HAS ACTUALLY REWARDED NALBUS' MILITANCY WITH A GRANT OF \$2 MILLION. SOME MAYORS, FREIJ INSISTS, ARE EVEN RECEIVING MONTHLY SALARIES FROM THE PLO.

5. DESPITE SUCCESS ELSEWHERE, SHAJA' HAS NOT FAILED TO TOUCH BASES WITH JORDANIAN OFFICIALS WHOSE COOPERATION WILL GREATLY FACILITATE TRANSFER OF FUNDS TO THE WEST BANK. WHILE IN AMMAN, SHAKA' REPORTEDLY MET WITH PM BADRAN, ADNAN ABU ODEH, HEAD OF OFFICE OF WEST BANK AFFAIRS, AND ODEH'S DEPUTY SHAWKAT MAHMOUD. ACCORDING TO "AL QUDS," THE GOJ HAS LOANED NABLUS \$300,000 FOR BUDGETARY SUPPORT AND AGREED TO STUDY A \$1.5 MILLION GRANT FOR HOUSING AND \$2.25 MILLION GRANT FOR SEWERS.

6. ISRAELI REACTION IS NOW THE BIG QUESTION. WHILE

MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS CAN BRING THE MONEY INTO THE WEST BANK WITH RELATIVE EASE, NO SUBSTANTIAL SUMS CAN BE SPENT WITHOUT MILGOV APPROVAL. IN THE PAST, THE MILGOV HAS SAID IT WILL DECIDE ON THE BASIS OF FUNDING SOURCE AND PROJECT. WHILE MONEY FROM THE PLO WOULD BE CLEARLY UNACCEPTABLE, LIBYAN MONEY MIGHT BE PERMITTED. SEWERS ARE GOOD BETS, ELECTRICAL GENERATORS NOT. IN THE PAST, PROJECT APPROVAL BY THE GOJ HAS BEEN REQUIRED AS WELL.

7. WHATEVER THE ISRAELI REACTION, SHAKA'S PERSONAL PRESTIGE HAS NO DOUBT BEEN BOOSTED. SKEPTICS WILL CERTAINLY WANT CONFIRMATION THAT LIBYAN AND SAUDI PLEDGES HAVE INDEED BEEN BANKED IN AMMAN. (COMMENT: CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 JERUSA 00912 300654Z

CAN EMBASSY AMMAN CONFIRM?) APPARENTLY SHAKA' HAS DISTINGUISHED CAREFULLY BETWEEN "MONEY IN THE BANK" AND THE MORE NEBULOUS PLEDGES OF TUNIS, JORDAN AND KUWAIT. IF SHAKA' HAS ACTUALLY BANKED SEVERAL MILLION, HIS EFFORTS WILL ECLIPSE THOSE OF OTHER MAYORS, SUCH AS HEBRON'S QAWASIMA WHO BANKED LESS THAN ONE MILLION FOLLOWING HIS TOUR IN SPRING 1977.

8. DURING HIS TRAVELS, SHAKA' REPORTEDLY MET SAUDI'S PRINCE FAHD, LIBYA'S QADDAFI, THE CROWN PRINCE OF QATAR AND FONMIN OF UNISIA. SUCH CONTACTS HAVE NO DOUBT ENLARGED SHAKA'S POLITICAL EXPERIENCE, AND MAY WELL HAVE ADDED TO HIS CONFIDENCE.
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